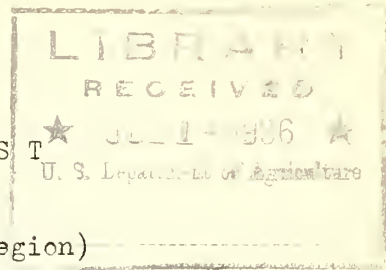


Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1.90
50395a



S O I L C O N S E R V A T I O N D I G E S T

(Monthly newsletter of the California-Nevada Region)

Issued at Headquarters, Region #10, Santa Paula, California

Volume 2, No. 9

June 1936

U. S. D E P A R T M E N T O F A G R I C U L T U R E
S O I L C O N S E R V A T I O N S E R V I C E

Harry E. Reddick, Regional Conservator	Santa Paula
Charles W. Petit, District Manager	Santa Paula
R. B. Cozzens, District Manager	Watsonville

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA

Ostrich-like Attitude Causes Denuding of Steep Hillsides.

Nothing affects the disposition of a Soil Conservation Service man so adversely as noting additional vegetated lands high up on steep hills being cleared preparatory to planting clean-cultivated crops.

With examples of reduced production on all sides due to soil washing, some farmers refuse to take heed and continue their ruinous policy of increasing the acreage of winter grown clean-cultivated crops.

Thoughtlessness rather than a destructive desire is responsible for their actions. If all conservation minded people would take it upon themselves to discuss soil erosion with these individuals progress would be made in preventing the extension of practices that can only result in more eroded hillsides.

Profitable production seldom continues for more than three years after these steep hills are cleared of their protective cover. The surface soil washes away leaving bare subsoil that has little power of absorbing rainfall. Run-off from these bare fields carries infertile subsoil on to valuable flat lands below. The additional run-off must be cared for to prevent destructive washing and gulying of this valuable low land at the base of the steeper hills. All apparent profit from the newly cleared steep lands must later be expended to protect the more valuable lands below. With fertile topsoil gone it is a very difficult matter to reestablish vegetation.

The thoughtlessness of these hillside farmers described above places them in the position of the ostrich in the fable wherein its head was buried in the sand.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA PROJECTS

Soil Conservation Surveys

During May over 2,950 acres were covered by detailed soil conservation surveys in the northern projects, distributed as follows: Sebastopol - 299 acres, Corralitos - 1890 acres, English Hills - 549 acres, and Placerville - 212.5 acres. A total of 35,503 acres have been surveyed to date. In addition to the surveys made during May detailed studies of several gullies in the Corralitos area were finished.

Corralitos

Survival of trees planted last winter in the Corralitos area is estimated to be over 95 per cent. Several showers occurred during May. At the end of the month the soil was quite moist. With such favorable soil moisture conditions it is probable that there will be an excellent survival during the summer months.

A summer forage demonstrational plot has been established in the area. Several summer crops are being tried out with the idea of finding the best crops for new land-use and crop rotation.

There are now 84 farms under co-operative agreement in this area, 10 farms being placed under agreement in May. Voluntary Soil Conservation Associations within the area now have a membership of 130.

During May seven permanent terrace outlets were completed. Over 460 acres were placed under a system of woodland management.

Sebastopol

During May the following work was accomplished in the Sebastopol area: 164 yards of bank-sloping; construction of 4 permanent dams; 366 feet of gully diversion ditches, and, 5 permanent terrace outlets. Rodent control crews covered 14 acres; topographic surveys were made of 85 acres.

Placerville

A laboratory has been set up in the Placerville area which will be used in an investigation of soil moisture changes. Determination of adequate yet not excessive water requirements will give valuable information for use in the soil conservation program.

Approximately a mile of concrete tile was laid in the area during May. Soil conservation surveys made during the month totaled 212 acres.

•

English Hills

The Vacaville-English Hills Soil Conservation Association now numbers 41 members, 4 of whom joined the Association during May.

Construction work in May was actively carried on on eight ranches, with a total of 760 acres. Fifteen farms in this area are under co-operative agreement, 2 of which were added in May. Soil conservation surveys of 549 acres were made during the month. During the same period 12 permanent terrace outlets were completed and 20 permanent dams constructed. Rodent control crews covered 268 acres.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PROJECTS

Soil Conservation Surveys

During May approximately 6,040 acres were covered by detailed soil conservation surveys on the southern projects, distributed as follows: Las Posas - 1123 acres, Aliso Creek - 795 acres, Vista - 290 acres, Palos Verdes - 2854 acres, and Lompoc - 982 acres. A total of 65,645 acres have been surveyed to date.

Las Posas

There are now 75 farms under co-operative agreement in the Las Posas area, one farm being added in May. During the month detailed soil conservation surveys were made of 1123 acres; over one mile of terraces were constructed; 7 permanent dams constructed, benefitting a drainage area of 1660 acres; 6 permanent terrace outlets were completed.

Aliso Creek

There are now 28 farms under co-operative agreement in the Aliso Creek area, 8 being added in May. The El Toro Soil Conservation Association has 29 members.

Over 19,000 square yards of grassed areas were seeded or established during May. Eight permanent dams, 32 permanent terrace outlets, over 1,000 lineal feet of diversion ditches were constructed. Rodent control crews covered 3,864 acres. Detailed soil conservation surveys were made of 795 acres.

Arroyo Grande

During May approximately 3.6 miles of terraces, 50 permanent terrace outlets, and 9 permanent dams were constructed in the Arroyo Grande area. Rock quarried amounted to 495 cubic yards. Fire suppression training was carried on in the Arroyo Grande CCC camp. Only one fire occurred during the month, being suppressed before making any great headway.

Lompoc

During May two permanent dams, 3,790 lineal feet of gully diversion ditches, and 13 permanent terrace outlets were constructed in the Lompoc area. Over 3,300 cubic yards of channel excavation for flood control and drainage was completed. Rodent control crews covered 200 acres. Detailed soil conservation surveys were made of 982 acres.

Farm Bureau Directors of Santa Barbara County made a tour of the area in May.

Fire suppression organization and training started in the Lompoc CCC camp with the Santa Barbara County Fire Department furnishing a teacher and the U. S. Forest Service supplied necessary tools for line action.

Co-operators in the Lompoc area in the past two months furnished 1,420 sacks of cement, 4 tons of reinforcing steel, in addition to teams and equipment, thereby aiding the progress of soil conservation work in this area.

Vista

During May 2,150 feet of terrace outlet channels, and 2 permanent terrace outlets were constructed in the Vista area. Detailed soil conservation surveys were made of 290 acres. In addition 880 square yards of gully bank were sloped preparatory to planting, and 600 square yards of terrace outlet planting was completed. Topographic surveys were made of 70 acres.

Palos Verdes

Eight permanent dams, 500 lineal feet of gully diversion ditches and 9 permanent terrace outlets were constructed. Rodent control crews covered 1,200 acres. Detailed soil conservation surveys were made of 2,854 acres.

NEVADA PROJECTS

The Soil Conservation Service program on private property, based on committee recommendations and started during the month in the Ursine, Crystal Springs, and Mesquite areas, was greeted with not only a readiness to sign co-operative agreements and provide materials, equipment, etc., to the best of the co-operators ability, but with an expressed willingness to follow in the future the plans for conservation recommended. Twenty-seven farms are now under co-operative agreement in Nevada, 22

agreements having been signed in May. There are now 155 members in voluntary Soil Conservation Associations in Lincoln County.

Outstanding work for the month of May was the construction of 144 permanent dams, benefitting a drainage area of 4,000 acres, and of 130 miles of terraced ditches.

Ursino

Two retaining wall revetments were started in the Ursino area in May. These will prevent further cutting and wasting of the soils in the upper end of Eagle Valley. Preliminary work was started on a concrete soil-saving structure in the lower end of Eagle Valley to stop a cutting back action that has over a period of twenty odd years destroyed hundreds of acres of valuable lands by the lowering of the water table in this area. During May 144 dams and 5,000 feet of diversion ditches were constructed.

Pahranagat Valley

The first unit of a six mile channel cleaning job was started in Pahranagat Valley. This project is the first choice of the recommendations submitted by the Pahranagat Valley Soil Conservation Association. When this work is finished it will tend to eliminate the flooding of adjacent lands.

Mesquite

Co-operative agreements covering all properties adjacent to Abbott's Wash in the Mesquite area have been signed, and the cleaning of the wash will be started in the near future. The development of springs, source of supply for the watering troughs on the proposed Bunkerville fenced area has been completed.

Crystal Springs

During May in the Crystal Springs area 130 miles of terraced ditches were constructed and 1,000 feet of channel cleaned. A portable office building for the Soil Conservation Service was constructed at Crystal Springs.

Caliente

A portable warehouse, a lumber shed, and an equipment shed were put up during the month by the Soil Conservation Service at Caliente. A gas tank and a pump have been installed.

1

2

3

OUTLINE OF THE SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE IN THE CALIFORNIA-NEVADA REGION

Regional Headquarters - City Hall, Santa Paula, California.

Southern District Headquarters - City Hall, Santa Paula, California.

Areas under the Southern District:

- Las Posas - Ventura County
Office - Santa Paula, California.
- Aliso Creek - Orange County
Office - Santa Ana, California.
- Arroyo Grande Sub-project - San Luis Obispo County
Office - Arroyo Grande, California.
- Lompoc - Santa Barbara County
Office - Lompoc CCC Camp, California.
- Palos Verdes - Los Angeles County
Office - Palos Verdes CCC Camp, California.
- Vista - San Diego County
Office - Vista CCC Camp, California.
- Nevada No. 1 - Lincoln County
Office - Caliente, Nevada.

Northern District Headquarters - 213 Main Street, Watsonville, California.

Areas under the Northern District:

- Corralitos - Santa Cruz County
Office - Watsonville, California.
- English Hills - Solano County
Office - Vacaville, California.
- Placerville - El Dorado County
Office - Placerville, California.
- Sebastopol - Sonoma County
Office - Sebastopol CCC Camp, California.

Visitors are welcome to these Soil Conservation Service demonstration areas and tours are conducted in co-operation with the Agricultural Extension Service.

